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**LETTER**

TO A

**COUNTY MEMBER,**

ON THE

**MEANS OF SECURING**

**A SAFE AND HONOURABLE**

**PEACE.**

*Copy Henry Becke MS 7*

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By these poyntes Flaundres was lest,  
Now is it out of rule and of rest,  
Drede is here chef gayte ;  
So eche man on hem bayte,  
That get they honge in awayte  
Of a new conquest.

*M. S. Bod. Lib. written about the year 1388.*

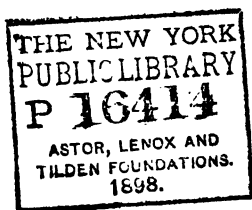
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**1798.**





## A LETTER, &c.

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I KNOW not to whom I can address the following observations with more propriety, than to an independent Representative of the people in parliament; whose zeal for the welfare of his country is not fettered by party spirit, or private interest; who in the present crisis anxiously wishes for peace, but yet believes that a few moments of respite from war may be bought too dear: and who knows that we still have ample means of humbling our inveterate enemy, provided they are employed with promptitude and with boldness.

For two years past we have been looking in vain for peace, from some supposed symptoms of returning moderation in our enemies; but no tendency to conciliation is now even pretended; and we have evidently no alternative but un-

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conditional submission, or triumphant resistance. If it were not so before, yet now, at any rate, it is become obviously necessary to adopt a decisive and enterprising system; such as will revive the military ardour of the people, call forth our own resources, and employ the Conquests which we have made, in procuring additional means of effectually reducing the power of France; and humbling her to sue for that peace which she now so arrogantly refuses to grant.

We have too long deceived ourselves with a hope that the depression of England was the wish of the prevailing factions only; and that a change of system in France would necessarily be followed by a change of real disposition towards us. But from France, whether Republican or Royalist, we can expect no sincere friendship; nor shall we ever have any lasting repose, while she is powerful enough to claim, and we have spirit enough to resist, that meddling with the interior concerns of independent nations, at which she has always aimed, and which every Frenchman, of every party, considers as the *geographical* prerogative of his country. I use a singular expression, but which will hardly be thought improper by those who are conversant in the

ancient as well as modern maxims of French politicians. From the time of Henry the Fourth to the present day, the pretension of a *natural* right to interfere in the disputes of other countries, and to parcel out Europe according to French convenience, has been asserted and acted upon with a vanity increasing as the dominion of France has increased; and this pretension has been avowedly founded on the *extent* of her territory, and its *central* situation; which entitles Paris to be the metropolis of Europe, and France to have all the influence of a metropolitan country. This is only one of many instances where the maxims common to all that nation have been mistaken for the peculiar doctrines of the Revolutionary party, because that party has found it convenient to avow them more openly, and act upon them with less reserve.

A similar mistake has been made with respect to the real grounds of the contest between France and England. The determined perseverance in hostilities against us does not arise from a fear of our effecting a Counter-revolution, for that is what many of the bitterest enemies of England very anxiously desire; neither is it from any wish to overturn the constitution of this country, unless the change



might in its consequences reduce us to political debility: for between rival nations the forms of government cannot be regarded in any other view than as affecting their relative power. France, while she remains a Republic, may possibly wish to promote a republican government here, because she knows that the Chiefs of it must owe their existence to her support, and be (like the Batavian Convention) the passive instruments of her ambition. But in any other point of view, she cares no more what sort of government we have, than she has cared for those of Venice and of Piedmont. Her care is to *enfeeble* us; and we have not a chance of peace, till either *her* power is reduced, or *Ireland* is irrevocably separated from Britain. Her object is to *wear* us out by tedious, inactive, and insupportably expensive war, which she hopes to be able to carry on without much cost to herself: and there is but too much chance of her succeeding, unless we adopt bolder political and military plans than we have lately done. The depression of England has long been the ruling passion of almost every Frenchman, of every party: the times have not created it; they have only made it more conspicuous; and indeed it would be a contradiction

to human nature, if the French nation did not almost universally feel this desire of taking any favourable opportunity for reducing our power.

That power is the more offensive to them, because it has the appearance of being so very much beyond the proportion of our natural strength. By natural strength, I mean that ability which we derive merely from our situation, population, &c. *within* the British islands; and not including what is derived from foreign commerce, and foreign territorial revenue. This is a mistake to which we have ourselves, perhaps, in some degree contributed: almost every where else through Europe, the science of political arithmetic has been employed in giving as advantageous a representation as possible, of the population and other internal circumstances upon which the strength of nations must ultimately depend; while *our* political ostentation has been purely *commercial*. We have not unfrequently talked as if our national existence, no less than our naval superiority, depended on the single circumstance of our commerce; and Europe in general has been considerably deceived by this language. I am well assured that there is in

other countries an almost universal persuasion, that the population\* of Great Britain amounts to hardly half the real number ; and it is thought that the commerce of which we are so proud, is almost exclusively the source of our revenue, and its preservation the only circumstance which can rescue us from political insignificance. I am very far from wishing to undervalue the advantages which we derive from our commerce ; I well know that our naval superiority depends on it ; and that in this view, as well as many others, it is of infinite importance. But it is mischievous to confine our attention to one object, as if others were comparatively insignificant. When we had but little commerce, and that little was principally carried on in foreign vessels, and supported by foreign capitals ; when our territory was limited to England, and a useless possession of Ireland ; when Scotland was the natural ally of France ; and we probably had not half our present population ; yet, nevertheless, we were a powerful and a conquering people. In later times, before our colonial system was become important, and while our commerce was in its infancy, we were rich and formidable, and stood high

\* See Appendix, No. I.

among the nations of Europe.\* The truth is, that this country must *always* rank among the greatest nations in Europe, from its *internal resources only*,† when unassisted by any adventitious circumstances; unless reduced, and weakened, and depopulated, by civil wars or destructive invasions.

But while the opinion is so general, and so much favoured even among ourselves, that our resources are perfectly artificial; can we expect that a people habitually ambitious and domineering, will view with patience a little neighbour presuming to be their rival, and in one instance maintaining an indisputable superiority; though inhabiting a country little more than half as extensive as their own, and, as they suppose, with a population not amounting to one-third of their own number? — Can it be imagined that while they feel their own strength, and are ignorant of ours; at a time too when circumstances have excited a military spirit, and a restlessness which must be employed somewhere; that in such a situation they will patiently endure our maintaining a naval superiority, in spite of that territorial strength, of which they have so recently

\* See Appendix, No. II. † See Appendix, No. III.

proved the energy. For more than seven successive centuries, the space of human life has not elapsed in which the traditional antipathy between the two nations has not been stimulated by actual hostility; and yet there are persons who imagine, that a few mild words, and moderate concessions, will disarm the resentment of France! and that in the pride of her victory over other nations, she will be satisfied to leave us the ability to oppose her ambition, and stand forward as the rivals of her power!

I am aware that a temporary cessation of hostilities, dignified with the name of peace, and celebrated with civic feasts and fraternal embraces, may unexpectedly answer the views of some prevailing faction among our enemies, and possibly among ourselves. But miserable indeed is the fate of England, if its future safety must depend on such a peace! France, whether governed by one tyrant or five, by an aristocracy or a mob, will still see a rival in England; and rivals must always be enemies. Self-interest may suspend, but can never eradicate the passions which are implanted by nature.

The British empire in Europe is circumscribed by limits with which it is our obvious interest to

be contented ; and I believe there are very few Englishmen imprudent enough to wish for an extension of our territory. But is this the situation of France, or the temper of her inhabitants ? her *one and indivisible* empire knows no limits, but the self-denying moderation of her temporary policy ; and as to her exterior empire, over nations nominally independent, it is boundless as her tyranny and her ambition !

But there is *one* instance, and only one, in which we too share with her the political jealousy of Europe. In our present circumstances, it is become in a peculiar degree our interest to remove the *commercial envy* we have excited ; and to remember

——*tacitus si pasci posset corvus haberet*  
*Plus dapis.*

A liberal policy is at all times the best policy ; and the more generally colonial possessions are divided among many nations, the more secure and less envied will be the political and commercial pre-eminence of England. If we mean to reduce France to her proper weight in the balance of Europe, it must be done, and can only be done, by diminishing her territorial acquisi-

tions. If we mean to provide for the future safety of our own country, this can only be done by expelling the French from Belgium. The means are in our possession, and they are the Conquests which we have made from France and from her allies. We must begin by laying the foundation of a military Union of the Northern Powers of Europe, upon such reciprocal advantages as will not be of a temporary, but a solid and permanent nature. We must begin by showing an unequivocal disposition to repress a little our own peculiar ambition, and must hereafter avoid dividing with France the jealousy of Europe. The way to be securely rich, is not to aim at being rich too soon; and our own commerce will lose nothing of its real importance by a willingness to facilitate the commercial enterprizes of our friends. I do not wish to recommend any measure which can place us on a less advantageous footing, in this respect, than we were before the war; I do not wish to alter any restrictions respecting the navigation to our own country, or to concede any right which the established law of nations gives to powers at war. But I think it is clearly our best interest to prove to the world, that we do not aim at our own aggrandizement by conquest. It

is our interest to employ the colonial conquests which we have already made, or may hereafter make, in restoring the equilibrium between France and ourselves, by a depression of *her* strength; and not by any fallacious increase of our own. It is our interest to use all the means which we derive from our naval superiority, in transferring as great a portion as possible of the advantages which may be gained by colonial possessions, from the Southern to the Northern nations of Europe. America was said to be conquered in Germany: let us in some degree reverse the proposition, and conquer France in the *Indias*!

My object is the formation of a military alliance of the Northern Powers of Europe, for the express purpose of diminishing the exorbitant territorial strength of the French Republic, by enabling *Prussia* to wrest from *her* the conquests which she has made on this side the Rhine; and as a compensation to *Russia*, *Sweden*, and *Denmark*, for the assistance which they may be disposed to give, I propose that when the primary object of the alliance is gained, and not before, we should divide among them our own colonial conquests, in stipulated proportions,



corresponding with the value of the military assistance given to Prussia ; but subject to such exchanges and regulations as, without deviating from the principle upon which those cessions may be made, may nevertheless be more convenient for the contracting parties. By such a plan the ultimate advantages of all the allies will be made to depend—not on fair promises of assistance, bought by subsidies, and forgotten when those subsidies are paid ; but on a sincere, an active, and a strong co-operation, till our object is gained.

The basis of my plan is this, that no other territorial arrangements, which are to be agreed upon in the treaty, are to take effect, unless at a general peace, *Prussia*, through the co-operation of our other allies to a stipulated extent, becomes possessed of all the territories west of the Rhine, which lately belonged to Austria ; subject however to arrangements for mutual convenience, as to the line of territorial division between France and Belgium ; but with this limitation of those arrangements, that no part of that line shall be more than fifty miles north of a right line drawn from Calais to Strasbourg. And in order to place a more effectual barrier to

the ambition of France, Prussia should not be expected to give up any part whatever of her present possessions, as in exchange for the French conquests from Austria; but might improve the connections of the one with the other, by giving to the United Provinces some equivalent for Maestricht, and negotiating an exchange of her Franconian territories for an equivalent from the Dutchies of Juliers and Berg.

I think there are substantial reasons why England ought to risk almost any thing in order to wrest Belgium from France, and why Prussia ought to join with equal earnestness in the attempt. As to ourselves, I shall for the present only say, that so long as France remains in possession of that country, our peace establishment must be ruinous in point of expence; and, under any form of government, dangerous to our liberties.

Asto Prussia, her Westphalian frontier is absolutely defenceless, and her influence in the United Provinces is a source of unextinguishable jealousy to the French Republic. Prussia is now the only great power in contact with France on her northern frontier; Prussia is the only power she can fear; and fear, added to a collision of interests, will

inevitably produce enmity. To Prussia, from the nature of her Westphalian territories, an extension of her frontier cross the Rhine is the only rational hope of safety. It is not my object to enter into any detail of the minuter arrangements tending to facilitate the success of this plan, or of the military force which can be furnished for the purpose. I will only observe, that Russia was not near so populous nor so powerful when she marched eighty thousand men, in one army, into the Prussian territories; and that a force equal to that which the northern nations maintained at their own expence, during the seven years' war, would be fully adequate to the expulsion of the French from Belgium; if acting in concert, and united by a sense of common danger, and the hopes of ultimate advantages. If to a consideration of the military means which may be brought to bear upon this point, the well known indisposition of the Belgians to their conquerors is added, and also the influence of the family of Orange in the United Provinces, it does not appear to me that Prussia will have any reason to be afraid of failing in this attempt. I know that it is supposed that Prussia is in considerable danger from the introduction of French prin-

ciples; and it is imagined that this circumstance must reduce her to the necessity of temporizing. Whatever might have been the case a few months ago, the situation of Prussia is now materially changed for the better; and she has no longer a king whose favourites have sold themselves to France. But if the assertion should be true, that Prussia is contaminated with French principles, (which however I very much doubt) yet the best way to stop a pestilence is to remove its cause to a distance; and, with the energy and expansive views of Frederic the Great, boldly march to meet the danger. It is a folly to hope that France and Prussia can long be friends, if remaining in their present situations. Frederic the Great knew the advantage of striking the first blow, and carrying the war out of his own country. The French armies have now left far in their rear the chain of fortresses which defended their country from invasion; but if only a short interval is allowed, the new frontier will be made as impregnable as the former one. Let Prussia calculate whether it is more prudent to meet the force of France a year or two hence in Westphalia, or now beyond the Rhine; whether she can afford to maintain as respectable a barrier

with her present population and revenues, as she could if possessed of the resources to be derived from the accession of a fertile country, with three or four millions of inhabitants; and whether a resolute invasion of the country now under the control of France would not inevitably lead to a destruction of the French interest in the United Provinces. The longer a spirited attack upon Belgium is delayed the more difficult it will be to effect a Counter-revolution in those Provinces, which are now open to an invasion from Germany, but may in a year or two more be hedged about by an impenetrable line of fortresses.

As to Austria, it would be greatly for her interest that some such plan as this should be adopted. She has no longer any connection with the Netherlands; and henceforward her ambition will naturally be turned to those points where the most is to be gained, and the least opposition is to be expected. Austria and Prussia are hereditary rivals, and it is equally the interest of both that their political views should be turned to opposite points, instead of those where they come into contact. Austria will no doubt discover the advantageous situation, in which an attack upon

Belgium will place her with respect to the Cisalpine Republic.

As to the lesser German princes, they may possibly dread France too much to risk a hasty approbation of such a plan, before they can calculate on the prospect of success : but they well know that their safety does not depend on the *Gallic* law of nations : and will undoubtedly be disposed to support any measure which is likely to keep France at a distance from them, and to render their situation more secure than it can be if her present schemes of partition are executed.

As to Russia, it is well known that she has long been ambitious of becoming a Maritime Power. To us she can never be formidable ; and we consult our own interest by giving her views in this respect every encouragement. It is of infinite consequence to all the other nations which are connected with America, that the island of *St. Domingo* should not belong to France : As to ourselves, I am sure we cannot afford the military establishment which will be wanted there, even in peace ; and if we could afford it, I doubt whether we should ultimately derive any advantage from possessing it. Shall it then belong to France, and expose our islands in its neighbour-

hood to perpetual insult and depredation? or shall it be ceded to a nation to which it will be of inestimable value, whose friendship it must secure to us by the strongest of motives, and which can easily spare the troops that will be wanted to civilize and defend it? The alternative is ruin or security to our islands in the West Indies.

As to Sweden and Denmark, the conduct of the French Republic towards those nations has hitherto been a sort of insolent indulgence of neutrality, and they have very wisely profited by it. They have no doubt beheld with serious, though silent apprehension, the aggrandizement of Prussia and Russia: but I cannot see that either of the first mentioned nations would have the smallest reason to suspect that the conquest of Belgium by Prussia would be at all prejudicial to themselves. And as to Russia, it is a maxim too obvious to need any long argument, that the necessary attention to valuable possessions at a distance, must lessen the inclination to be troublesome nearer home. Sweden and Denmark are certainly under no obligations to the French Republic, which has deigned to let them be neutral for no other reason but because with-

out their assistance she must have been naked. Sweden has often felt the consequences of the interference of France in her domestic concerns; and neither of those nations has any protection from her mischievous meddling, but by such measures as may reduce her to the necessity of renouncing that system which she now so openly avows. As to any protection which they can derive from an alliance with her, it is not less to be dreaded than her enmity. But we, on the contrary, have conquests from France and the allies, or, more properly, the vassals of France, which we ought not to keep, unless to prevent them from becoming useful to an enemy that at present seems implacable. By cessions of some of these, we have it in our power to reward very amply any assistance which Sweden or Denmark might be disposed to afford us.

As to the United States of North America, they are too wise not to see the advantages which they must derive from such a balance of power in the West Indies, as would be the consequence of a more equal and general partition of the colonies there. France will never be long together well disposed to the United States, because they must of necessity be well disposed to England.



Accidents and temporary folly on either side may now and then interrupt the harmony between us; but that man knows little of the human heart, who supposes that any accident or folly can long together supersede the influence of hereditary feelings, and similar habits of social life. Whenever America is our friend, France will be her enemy: she has not indeed any ruinous consequences to dread from this circumstance; for the utmost mischief it can do her is to retard a little that greatness which nothing can prevent. But yet she would be in no danger of being teased and insulted by Russia; and her commercial connections with St. Domingo would, in this case, be infinitely more valuable.

As to the southern States of Europe, those within the Mediterranean are not at all concerned in the question, nor would the interests of Portugal be in any respect injured. Spain has already ceded her part of St. Domingo to France: and if any further losses should be the consequence of the offensive alliance into which she has entered; at least, she has no right to complain if we employ the means in our power to indemnify ourselves for the injury we sustain by hos-

ilities that we used every endeavour to avoid. Perhaps it is compassion which has hitherto induced our Ministers to refrain from compelling Spain to open the commerce of South America to all the world. We certainly have not refrained from want of means; because we have such as would render any opposition that Spain can make to them contemptible. If any one asks, where they are to be found? let him turn his thoughts to India, to the myriads of brave and well-disciplined troops which it can furnish, and the swarms of ships which are engaged in its commerce. But what resistance can it be supposed that the Spanish Americans would make to a proposition, which demands no contributions as a due for the kindness of importing anarchy and desolation! offers no violence to their feelings by conquest; insists on no renunciation of opinions which time has made dear to them; but merely promises the assistance of England, in order to secure to South America that free agency, which France and Spain claim so much merit for having contributed to give to *our* colonies in the northern part of that continent? If our enemies will compel us to resort to *all* the means we have in our power, let us adopt a system which can

bring *all* of them into action; let us prove to the world that we are not actuated by a desire of territorial aggrandizement, or of commercial monopoly; and that we wish for no exclusive advantages to ourselves. *Conquest* we ought not to desire; and as to *Commerce*, we need not be afraid of competition.

I am well aware of an objection to the plan which I propose, and which to some persons may seem a strong one. It will be said, that however desirable the success of such a plan may be, yet the adoption of it would necessarily protract the war, which is exceedingly burthensome, and which otherwise might possibly be brought to a more speedy conclusion. I am no advocate for war; if peace can be obtained on any tolerable conditions. From the *very beginning* of this unfortunate contest I have earnestly wished to see every chance of moderation in our enemies improved by conciliatory propositions on our part; but I have never wished for the disgrace and ruin of my country. I should *now* rejoice if an immediate renewal of negotiation might produce a peace on moderate terms, but not on the dangerous conditions on which we have already humbled ourselves to ask it: condi-

tions which nothing less than disappointment and despondence could have suggested, and nothing but the insolence of folly could have rejected.

It cannot be denied that there is in general a very strong feeling of the distress arising from a war so unprecedentedly expensive. This is not the clamour of those only who wish for invasion and general confusion, and of which description I am convinced the number is very inconsiderable; but it is sensibly felt by those who are not easily shaken in their principles, nor easily dispirited. In such a state of the public mind, I admit that nothing less than the most apparent necessity can justify the adopting any scheme which may preclude us from taking advantage of the first opportunity of making a moderately good peace. No one can more sincerely wish that there were a chance of our having in a short time such an opportunity; but it will surely be allowed that there is a want of common sense in regulating our conduct by the chance of an event which we have no solid reason to expect. To me it appears, that in case France should be left without any other opponent but ourselves, there will not be a shadow of reason to expect an im-

mediate peace; or indeed any peace at all, but upon conditions which will virtually sacrifice the national independence, and reduce the people in general, but more particularly the trading part of the nation, to a state of inconceivable misery. But "what we wish we easily believe," and as the universal wish is for peace, we anxiously look about to catch some faint gleam of hope that the end of these awful calamities may be less distant, and less unfortunate, than present circumstances threaten. As to myself, I confess my only hope of this is a total disappointment of the French in the present Congress at Rastadt.

But besides this chance, there are not fewer than five widely different opinions on which the same hope is founded; or if not exactly the same, yet a hope that the termination of hostilities between us and the French republic, even if we submit to the most disadvantageous and dishonourable conditions, may notwithstanding lead to circumstances which will ultimately compensate for any immediate sacrifice.

First, There are some persons who indulge themselves in a hope that the French Republic may, without much danger to her neighbours, be left in full possession of all her territorial ac-

quisitions, and all the influence she has gained by her intrigues and her victories. They believe that her system has in itself the seeds of inevitable ruin; that nothing has prevented the most sanguinary contests at home, but the resistance opposed to her abroad. They say that in our present conduct we need not be guided by any fears of future mischief; because long continued discord will at last waste her strength so much as to disable her from meddling with her neighbours, and will even reduce her to such weakness that she will be unable to make any effectual resistance to attempts, which may then be safely made, to wrest from her what she now gains by the energy of her Revolutionary system. —“ Get out of the madman’s way; let him spend his rage upon himself; and when he is exhausted and asleep we will bind him!” — But will he let us get out of his way? will he ever weaken himself so much that we shall be able to bind him, if we do not bind him now? I once hoped so, in common with many others; but I am afraid that neither of these questions can, upon any sound reasoning, be answered in the affirmative. Historical experience is certainly not very encouraging; for, from the earliest

ages of the world, nations, in proportion as they have been restless at home, have also been troublesome to their neighbours.

In any stage of social life beyond that of the savage who hunts for his daily food, a part only of mankind are employed in producing provisions and other articles of prime necessity; of the remainder a part is employed in supplying the artificial wants of civilized life; and the rest live altogether without manual labour, and in the ruder stages of society divide their time between indolence and military activity. The pastoral life, where a thinly spread population subsists with very little bodily labour, has always been, in every period of the history of mankind, the most military, the most enterprising, and the most destructive in its invasions.\* Whereas the more numerous the population, which is compelled to live on the production of a circumscribed territory, the greater proportion of it must be busied in providing necessities, and the fewer out of an equal number can be spared for unproductive employments. A million of Tartars could, without inconvenience, spare at least twice as many soldiers as a million of Chinese, and

\* See Appendix, No. IV.

these infinitely more handy, more active, and more readily assuming a military character. Let us apply this reasoning, which is founded in historical experience to the consequences which neighbouring nations may expect from long continued discord in France.

Already the effects of that discord on the habits of social life, have thrown her many steps backward from that highly advanced state of civilization in which she was before the Revolution; and in which an innumerable multitude of artificial wants fill up that void of labour which is occasioned by the facility of supplying all real wants with a moderate portion of human industry. When a very numerous population is limited to a small space of ground, from which its subsistence is to be derived, a species of gardening cultivation is necessarily adopted, and the agricultural class must bear a very high proportion to the whole number; but in general the quantity of necessary manual labour diminishes in the same degree in which this proposition is reversed.

It is well ascertained, that before the Revolution France was in that stage of society in which all the real necessities of life are produced



by the labour of about two-thirds of those whose age renders them capable of working; and in which the remaining third part is divided into those who live without any manual labour, and those who are employed in providing the artificial accommodations of life.

Now it is obvious, that the fewer of these accommodations are called for, the more of this third part of what some writers call the active population, must be deprived of their usual means of subsistence. And the French Revolution, by striking directly at the property of the rich, in its necessary consequence cut off almost instantaneously the usual employments, and with them the source of subsistence of a very considerable part of the population. At the same time it reduced to nothing the incomes of the Clergy and the Monastic Orders, and of course the only support of their numerous dependents, and thus added very considerably to the labouring class at the very time when, from the same primary cause, the demand for labour was diminished.

In this situation was France when she began the war; and with a population of at least twenty-five millions. Her Nobles were exiled or plundered, her Clergy deprived of their revenues,

a great part of the usual labour suspended, and multitudes already reduced to the most abject want. The Republic fancied itself inexhaustibly rich, while the people were every where clamorous for bread. Can it be wondered that France desired war, and that she found myriads of soldiers?

Since the three millions whom Cæsar destroyed in the same country, no war, perhaps, has any where been so murderous as the present. France has already lost a very considerable part of her military \* population. But notwithstanding this she still finds soldiers; and, what at the first view seems more paradoxical, her agriculture is more fully adequate to her necessities than it was before the Revolution.

It is almost uniformly asserted by those who have lately travelled through France, that in general the country is at least as well, though perhaps not as extensively, cultivated as before the Revolution; that it is amply productive in proportion to the wants of the people; and that the *labour is chiefly performed by women*. This latter circumstance solves the whole enigma; and exactly corresponds with my ideas of the inevitable conse-

\* See Appendix, No. V.

quences of her Revolutionary morals, in the present stage of the progress of France towards total barbarity. Female domestics are no longer wanted in their former proportion; the manufactures which occupied them are annihilated, the lighter labours in the production of the elegancies of life find little encouragement, and the weaker sex must either drudge in the fields or starve. By every account France is going backward with hasty strides to that Golden Age, in which the Lords of the Creation are just what the vulgar suppose that great men are born to be, quite at their ease; and have nothing to do but to fight, drink, dance, and sing *Ca Ira*.\* In such a state she must of course have abundance of men, who from necessity or choice will adopt a military life; and the more poor, the more immoral, the more habitually idle a nation becomes, the more dangerous she will be to her neighbours.

Hitherto it is certain that her military means have not very sensibly diminished; and if we flatter ourselves that a much longer continuance of discord and domestic confusion, rendered much more desolating and depopulating than it has hitherto been, will reduce France so as to

\* See Appendix, No. VI.

disable her from being troublesome to her neighbours, we shall certainly be deceived. Tumult after tumult may cut off half her population, and lay waste half her territory; yet means of resuming offensive operations will not be wanting, and domestic distress will give the inclination to foreign hostilities. If an example from history is wanted, it may be found in that of our own island, by comparing the state of civil society in Scotland during the time of her destructive wars with England, and the state to which France seems now to be rapidly approaching. A very thinly scattered population of this description is more to be dreaded than numerous inhabitants in the same extent, with employments resulting from the undisturbed gradations of civilized life.

I do not put it as a probable, but only as a possible case, that the French Republic may continue, *one and indivisible*, till discord has so thinned the population, and changed the habits of the people, as to carry them back to the pastoral state; certainly it is much more likely, that if they continue to act upon their present theories of social life, they may in the end divide themselves into as many petty states as existed in Gaul

before it was conquered by Cæsar. But even in a merely pastoral state, France could maintain many millions of inhabitants, who, if united by nothing else, yet might be easily associated for the purposes of depredation. In that state, all the necessaries of life, and even all the artificial wants, can easily be supplied, without any labour at all of those who are able to bear arms; and in that state, such a country as France might easily spare at least a million of men for any predatory expedition, though she might be totally unable to keep together even a very moderate force for the purposes of defence. A Brennus\* might burn Rome, though a Vercingetorix could not resist Cæsar.

Secondly, There are others whose hope is of a directly opposite kind. I wish I could encourage it; but I fear it is founded on a much better opinion of men, let loose from the restraints of law, than they deserve. It is hoped, however, that when France has no longer any foreign enemies, instead of devouring herself, she will immediately become tranquil; that her New Constitution will then become the real rule of government; that with returning peace the former artificial demands for labour will also re-

\* See Appendix, No. VII.

turn; and that four or five hundred thousand men, who for seven or eight years have lived by plunder, and been habituated to licentiousness, will all at once find employment in a country without employers or capital, and become industrious, orderly, and moral. Surely this is the wildest of dreams!

I will concede thus much to the admirers of the New French Constitution, that it has great merit when considered as a substitute for total anarchy. Perhaps it is as good as its framers could venture to make it, with any chance of its being even nominally accepted.\* But yet I scarcely know *any* regular government; of *any* *species* (which time and occasional modifications has accommodated to the people subject to its authority) that is not better adapted to preserve social order, and consequently to promote private happiness.

But after all, is there a chance that the New Constitution, or any other constitution upon Democratic principles, will ever become the real rule of government in France? As to that which they now have *upon paper*; not to enter into a detail of its many striking defects, I will only

\* See Appendix, No. VIII.

observe, that its arrangements in general, but especially its judicial ones, are exceedingly undefined, numerous, and liable to undue influence; and that the multitude of agents of every kind, whose maintenance is inseparable from its existence, render it insupportably expensive. But besides all this, there is one formidable obstacle to the possibility of a real Democracy in France, which does not appear to enter at all into the calculations of the speculative friends of that species of government: I mean a standing army.\* The reasons why they cannot exist together, must be manifest to any one who will give himself the trouble to inform his mind on the subject.

Thirdly. Others expect that a Counter-revolution will be the termination of all the French experiments in government; that the people, weary of discord, will once more adopt their old principles, and quietly submit to a family which has ruled them for so many centuries. Upon this opinion, which I allow to be very probable, they found another, which I cannot think equally so; and flatter themselves that if the ancient Monarchy could once be restored, it would also restore, or more properly give, to France a pacific

\* See Appendix, No. IX.

and unambitious disposition. A Counter-revolution, to the extent of establishing a well-limited Monarchy there, is certainly to be desired by every friend of mankind : it ought to be desired even by those of them who are speculatively friends of Democracy ; for surely, by this time experience should have taught them the insuperable obstacles to its permanent existence in any country which is under the necessity of maintaining garrisons, and keeping up the various gradations of military authority. As to myself, I can see no end to a government of Mamľukes in France, but in the re-establishment of Monarchy. But the time when this desirable change may happen, must depend entirely on the caprice or the dissensions of the standing army. Such a change would undoubtedly give her neighbours less reason to fear the introduction of anarchy among them ; but it is not her meddling disposition alone which makes France formidable. I admit that the energy of her government might then be less than it now is ; but if she is suffered to retain her present acquisitions, she will always be dangerous even under the most inert administration. The standing army which changes a government, may change it again, and pre-



tences for giving it distant employment will be as easily found, and in many circumstances will be not less desirable, under a Monarchy as under a Republic. Our primary object ought to be the diminution of the extent and the force of France; for under any sort of government her ambition and her envy will remain; and she will still desire to prevent commotions at home by humouring the popular antipathy against us.

Fourthly. There are others who express themselves as if they thought that every thing depended, almost exclusively, on a reform in the internal arrangements of our own government. But in their zeal for one question, they almost entirely overlook the importance of another. Admitting that the measures which they recommend would make us stronger, more united, &c. &c. admitting all the advantages which the most visionary reformer can promise—will our strength make France weak?—will our prosperity annihilate her envy?—can we hope by any such means to swell ourselves to the bulk of France, or to make up for the disproportion of territorial power and political influence which she will possess, if she retains her present acquisitions, and her present authority over the nations which

she is systematically reducing to an absolute dependence on her will?

Fifthly. Another opinion seems to be countenanced by some men of great political importance; which is, that with respect to those acquisitions of France which are at our very doors, and which threaten the very existence of London, nothing now remains to be done; but to submit quietly to the necessity of the case, drive as good a bargain as we can, and indemnify ourselves, in part at least, for the misfortune, by enlarging our own possessions at a distance. If France gains twenty or thirty millions of acres in the Low Countries, we will add at least as many to our territories in Africa!—if she adds to her population three or four millions of Belgians, we will at least have all the Hottentots we can find. I will boldly say, that if France retains Belgium, and by a necessary consequence, her present influence in the United Provinces, then any foreign acquisitions, which would require any drain of our internal strength to protect them, or any part of our wealth to make them productive, instead of being an advantage, would only be an aggravation of our calamities.

While France was only contesting with us the empire of the seas, and was not aiming at

our existence as an independent nation, it was possibly worth while to enlarge our foreign possessions, in order to increase our commerce, and with it the number of our sailors. But if she retains possession of Belgium, then we must have recourse to a new system of policy, new arrangements of defence: and instead of being able to support foreign establishments, we shall be obliged to condense our force on the eastern side of the kingdom; where, even in peace, we must always be well provided against the danger of sudden invasion.

It is a favourite project with the French Republic to make Antwerp what Amsterdam has been, and to turn the commerce of this part of Europe towards that port by any means which can be devised. In Antwerp and its neighbourhood she can always keep a force, which will at least be equal to any piratical invasion. Her situation there will give her the absolute command of all the naval force of the United Provinces; and besides this, in a few months after the cessation of hostilities, she will be able to collect vessels enough of her own in the Scheld for any predatory project. In that case, how are we to provide for the security of the metropolis from the consequences of a

sudden attack, whenever caprice or ambition may prompt her to insult us? distant possessions will be of little advantage to our commerce, unless its emporium is safe. The trade of the metropolis will inevitably diminish in proportion to its insecurity as a place of deposit; the wealth and strength of the empire will be wasted in measures of defence, and a great military force must be maintained, with all its concomitant evils. Instead of enlarging our dominion, we shall soon find ourselves reduced to the necessity of withdrawing our protection from the remote possessions, which we have hitherto cultivated with advantage, or defended with glory; as the Romans in the decline of their empire, were obliged to withdraw their legions from Britain.

I am not conscious that I have in any respect overstated the evils which we have to dread, if France should be able to retain her present conquests in Belgium. I am convinced that it would be a misfortune for which nothing could compensate; and since we are compelled to continue the war, I think we ought to make every other consideration subservient to this *one* object, and that no possible means should be left untried to expel the French from that country, and place it

in hands which are powerful enough to defend it, and restore the barrier between France and the United Provinces.

But notwithstanding my conviction of the infinite importance of this object, yet I am well aware that the subject should be examined in every possible view, before the nation entangles itself in another confederacy.

If there were at present any prospect of peace upon equitable conditions ; if, instead of animosity the most implacable, and insults the most outrageous, we could discover either among the chiefs of any of their factions, or in the general mass of the people, any symptom, on which to found the slightest hope, that their present threatening manner was only assumed for the purpose of intimidation ; if we could see any chance that they will ever give up a project,\* which existed long before the Revolution was thought of, which was acted upon from the moment of their victory at Jemappe, and has been invariably persisted in by all parties, and under all circumstances, though with unequal degrees of violence ; if there were a chance of their desisting before repeated disappointments have convinced them of the folly of

\* See Appendix, No. X.

their designs against us ; or if there were now any reasonable ground for believing that their military resources will prove inadequate to the support of protracted hostilities ; then I confess that, great as the stake is, yet it might admit of some doubt, whether we ought to forego the contingency of peace, for any measure which in its consequences might oblige us to persist in the war.

But at present the case is totally different. We have not the choice of peace or war, and we have no reasonable ground to hope that we shall *ever* have it, till either our enemies are wearied and hopeless, or till they may desire to anticipate the effects of a formidable confederacy against them. They will not give up their projects of dividing the British islands into three or four unconnected republics, till they are convinced that is absolutely impracticable.

As long as we are obliged to support this contest singly, the whole force of France will be directed against us with undivided animosity. If our councils are but sufficiently bold and vigorous, I have not the smallest doubt but that we shall terminate it triumphantly ; but before that can happen, the war will inevitably have been protracted to a great length ; and after all, our

most important object will not be obtained : for however great our success may be, if singly opposed to the French ; yet we cannot hope to drive them out of Belgium without Continental assistance.

The question comes to this :—In our present situation, with a certainty that we cannot have an immediate peace, and with no well founded hope that we can have it at all for years to come, if we continue single in the contest, is it most advisable to depend solely on ourselves, or endeavour to divide the force of our enemy, to deprive her of that conquest from which we are most in danger, and effect all this without making any sacrifices to our friends, but such as we have already offered to an insulting enemy without compensation, and merely as the price of peace.

The chance of bringing France to reason is indeed very small ; but the only chance we have of doing it, is in her expectation that otherwise a formidable confederacy, compacted by common fear and common advantage, may reduce her to the necessity of receding even from such demands as perhaps might now be complied with. She probably would endeavour to prevent so strong a union by an affectation of a pacific disposition ;

but it would I fear even then be followed by no good consequences. She is so innately hostile, so proud of her own strength, and so convinced of our weakness, that we ought to put little confidence in pacific expressions, employed only to disarm us. If we defy her enmity, we are safe. If we trust to her friendship, we are inevitably undone.

While I am writing this, I find that she has given one more proof, if any further proof were wanted, of the value of her friendship. She has adopted a measure which is particularly aimed against the free navigation of her allies, though ostensibly intended only against us : and she has done this in so offensive a manner, and with so direct a proof of her determination, that laws enacted by the French Councils shall claim a right of superseding the law of Nations, that in any other times but these, the most inconsiderable of the maritime Powers would have replied to it by an immediate declaration of hostilities. It is not so much against us, as against the neutral nations of the North that the blow is directed ; for by compelling us to confine our trade to our own vessels, she does us no great injury, and deprives them of a very considerable benefit.

In addition to the means which I think we



have of binding the Northern nations to us, the effects of this and many other insults cannot but give them a wish to concur in any measures for the general protection of Europe from such tyranny. Nothing else is wanting to a general union for that purpose, but a security that there will be no desertion from the common cause, of which I should hope there would be no great danger, if we held the links of the chain.

But if any circumstances should prevent the adoption of this plan to the full extent of my idea on the subject, yet still I think we ought to find the best market we can for our conquests, and dispose of them for as much Continental or Naval assistance as we can procure. If a general confederacy is found impracticable, yet Russia would probably be very glad to accept our posts and our interest in the island of St. Domingo, upon the single condition of sending thither a force which she can very easily spare. If only this were done, the French Directory would be very much perplexed, and we should save an enormous expence.

But if unfortunately the situation of Europe is such that peace must be submitted to without any concerted attempt to restore the independence

of its governments ; yet even then the principle upon which I propose this alliance might be recurred to on some future occasion : if the apprehension of the consequences of such an alliance should induce our enemies to lower their tone, and agree to such conditions of peace as we can safely accept, in order to prevent us from adopting the only means by which we can rescue the United Provinces, and deprive them of Belgium ; yet still, in such a situation, we cannot hope for any long cessation of hostilities. And if the restless ambition of our neighbour should involve us in another war, instead of hiring auxiliary troops by subsidies, let us adopt it as a principle to employ our naval force in paying our allies by conquests from our enemies. Let us lend our navy for any enterprizes whither our allies may be willing to send their soldiers ; making no pretensions to aggrandize ourselves by territorial acquisitions ; but contented with having the means of increasing the force, and at the same time diminishing the expence of resistance to our enemies ; and with participating in the benefit of a free Colonial commerce.

If such an alliance as that which I propose were once formed, it cannot be doubted but that

it would give a considerable turn to the political intrigues of our enemies; and it is very probable that, instead of persisting in an attempt to intimidate, they would change their language, and profess a disposition to peace: they would probably appear the more conciliating in their conduct, and the more liberal in their offers, in proportion as they supposed us to be more closely bound to our allies by extensive engagements, which the unalterable good faith of the British nation would prevent us from breaking. And they would do this with the malignant policy, of fomenting divisions and discontents among us.

“ If our government had not rashly entered into  
 “ engagements which we cannot honourably  
 “ break, we might now have peace! The French  
 “ are no longer ambitious, no longer intriguing!  
 “ But we would not have patience to wait a  
 “ little; and now we must go on with this ruin-  
 “ ous war!” Such are the sentiments which  
 our enemies will endeavour to excite, when they  
 find that intimidation can no longer avail them.  
 But in order to defeat the intention of any such  
 artifices, the most prudent way is to provide  
 against them beforehand.

To those who think that it would be an eter-

nal disgrace to the name of Briton, if we were now to make any overtures of a conciliatory kind; now when our pacific propositions have been repeatedly rejected, and our enemies appear to be working themselves up to a pitch of fury little short of insanity, I must answer, that I cannot see any inconvenience or any disgrace in our making one more attempt (but not as *suppliants*) to know *explicitly* the *whole* of the propositions which France may be disposed to make; provided they are accompanied by an express *disavowal* of any *ulterior demands*. Undoubtedly we were not fairly treated at Lisle, either by the party among our enemies which wilfully delayed the progress of the negotiation, or by the victorious faction which terminated it so rudely. But indignation ought to give way to a desire of convincing the people that a peace is *impossible* on any terms. I do not mean that we should debase ourselves by sending ambassadors, to be once more driven away like suspected spies; for, in fact, the meeting of plenipotentiaries, to discuss and conciliate the jarring pretensions of negotiating governments, ought always to be *preceded* by a reciprocal understanding as to the extent of the claims to be discussed; and any conversation on any

article, however trifling, till the whole demands are known, is worse than useless.

France is not as yet sufficiently aware of the consequences of rousing a slumbering lion; she is not aware of the internal resources of this country, nor of the means we have of arming a powerful and persevering confederacy against her. At least, we ought to convince our enemies that we do not solicit peace either from cowardice or imbecillity, and convince our own people that all means are tried, before we proceed to extremities.

If we cannot have peace, we must *strike home!* an active war can alone give energy to the nation, or stifle discontent; and even if the wresting Belgium from the French Republic were an object of much less importance than it is; yet we ought to spare no endeavours to carry the war into that country, because it is there that France is at present most vulnerable.

An active war—a war upon the enemy's coast, is the only one that, even if left single against France, we can carry on without inevitable ruin. If we resume active operations, the national character will once more be displayed. A *fifth* part of our naval force, and a *fifth* part of our armies,

employed in threatening France, would do more towards bringing her to reason than any humiliating concessions. If a *fifth* part only of our present military force were employed in spreading terror on her coasts, that *fifth* part would furnish two distinct armies, each of them more numerous than any one of those which triumphed at St. Maloes, at Cherbourg, at Bellisle, under the splendid administration of the late Lord Chatham. Some of our expeditions, in that war were unsuccessful, and some of them might be so now; but *all* of them contributed to distract the attention, and cripple the exertions of the French nation, and none of them occasioned any considerable loss to us, except the ill-conducted embarkation at St. Cast. France *then* trembled to her very centre; and there is now no reason why the same causes should not produce the same effect. From such a war, if simply confined to its proper object, and not pretending to meddle with any thing more, we should derive this good effect at home, that the confidence of the nation would revive, public credit would revive, and our resources would once more be accessible. If we *strike home*, France will feel!—half the men may return to their usual

occupations, who are now quietly waiting under arms till the enemy comes to attack them ; and at least as much might be spared from our present expence in defensive arrangements, as would be wanted to carry the war to the opposite coast.

I speak with confidence in the truth of what I say, when I assert that a great part of that coast never was in a state so little able to oppose a resistance adequate to the means we have of attacking it as at present. A great part of it is discontented, and at this very moment, while France is insulting us beyond all enduring, and boasting as if her soldiers had only to land and subdue us, there exists a part of her own coasts where not twenty thousand disciplined troops are to be found within a space little less extensive than England. In the very centre of the part where she is weakest there are important points which are by no means difficult of access, and which are almost incapable of defence. In the war before the last, great pains had been taken to protect the maritime parts of France ; her militia had been embodied and trained, and all those defensive measures had been adopted, which are dictated by a consciousness of danger, and which too often fail in their object, because they increase that consciousness of danger,

which is more mischievous than the weapons of an enemy. A nation which attends only to its own defence (and I wish the observation may not be applicable to ourselves) is half conquered by its fears. For three or four years past the French have been solely occupied on the means of offensive war, and have possibly thought that the poverty of their coast, and of their maritime towns, would prevent any contemplation of an invasion where nothing is to be gained but Glory.

But though we need not fear any thing, even if we remain single in the contest, provided we make the exertions of which we are capable; yet in that case we must not hope to gain what ought to be our most important object. For though we may tease France on her coasts, and at last make her sincerely wish for peace; yet we cannot hope to expel her from the United Provinces and Belgium, without the active and firm support of Prussia and Russia.

I do not wish to enter into a more particular detail of the means of carrying into effect the plan which I propose; neither might it be prudent to make public all the political arrangements which may be adopted to make colonial possessions a more convenient property to the Northern na-



tions, whose ports are frozen up during a considerable part of the year; by accommodations for their navigation, which might be of great use to them; and of very material benefit to some remote and unfrequented parts of our own islands, and which might greatly contribute to strengthen the connection between us. For the same reason I avoid saying any thing respecting *other* means, of making *other* states parties in such a general confederacy, besides those which I have mentioned. I hope I have said enough to demonstrate the good policy of the general principle which I have proposed; and more than that, the reader will concur with me in believing to be unnecessary, and perhaps impolitic; even if an individual, like myself, could be supposed to possess all the necessary information.

A few remarks may, however, be added without impropriety.

While Austria retained her title to the Netherlands there would have been obvious difficulties in executing the plan which I have proposed; but those difficulties are removed by the ratification of the treaty of Campo Formio. If the attempt is too long delayed, our enemies may possibly find means to counteract it; and at any

rate the season for military preparation will be lost. Our expences are heavy, the situation of Europe is critical, and time is precious. Now, seems to be the moment for uniting many nations against France, by solid advantages to all parties in the confederation; advantages which can bind a compact the more firmly, because they are not of a nature to produce jealousy among the contracting parties; and because the acquisition of them may be made to depend on a successful conclusion of the enterprize for which the parties are united.

If a general peace is made before such an alliance is concluded, it may hereafter be found impracticable. If we do not cede our conquests to our friends, we must either keep them, or restore them to our enemies; a dilemma almost equally injurious either way. If the French Republic is suffered to retain Belgium, now that its frontier is penetrable, and its inhabitants are irritated by recent oppressions; who will attempt to drive her from that country, when its frontier is covered with fortresses, and its inhabitants are more assimilated to their conquerors? If we give up those means of compensation to the auxiliaries of Prussia, which we now have in

our own hands, where shall we find them, if at any future time we should wish to assist Prussia by a similar confederation?

Such an alliance, if it can be accomplished, will establish the national character on the most advantageous ground, and will lay the foundation of lasting amity between England and the countries which profit by her liberality; because it will make that opposition to France by sea the common interest of many nations, which is now considered through Europe as the single interest of England. Our navy, instead of being merely the bulwark of our own dominions, will then be looked upon as essential to the protection of commercial liberty.

In the course of the preceding Observations I have used the freedom of an Englishman, who still is bold enough to defend an opinion that has now, for between four and five centuries, been almost always considered as the primary object of all our political connections on the Continent. I do not say this object has *never* been lost sight of; because I am aware that periods may be found in our history, when the aggrandizement of France has been seen without jealousy, and the possession of the Netherlands has been view-

ed with indifference.—Were those the days of Edward the First or his grandson, of Elizabeth, of William, of Anne, or of George the Second?

In that wilderness of political opinions which has succeeded to the established policy of mankind, the question to which I am now feebly, but anxiously, attempting to turn the public attention, has not indeed been altogether overlooked; but yet it does not seem to have been brought forward by any political party among us, with that distinctness and discrimination from inferior objects which it deserves. Without meaning to take captious exceptions to the conduct of public men of any party, I cannot help lamenting the consequence of our unsettled opinions as to what ought to be the principal object of the war. While the compass is out of repair, and land is out of sight, while the man at the helm steers for one point, the sails are set for another, one says we ought to shape an easterly, another a westerly course; and the captain of the forecabin, at the head of a grumbling part of the crew, bawls out that we are *all* in the wrong. While this is the case, if the ship does not absolutely go to the bottom, yet her provisions may be totally exhausted before she can make any port at all.

It may perhaps be thought presumption in an unimportant individual like myself, to differ in some respect or other from almost all the favourite opinions of the different parties among us. But in this anxious moment, the first object in the heart of every Englishman should be to direct, if possible, the general attention to a *single point*. Scattered rays of solar light, when collected to one point, can kindle a flame; and that patriotism, which is now wandering in all directions, if it were but collected against one object, would burn with irresistible fury.

In our present situation, I think that no man, however small his personal importance may be, should decline any exertion in the common cause, if there is but a chance of doing good to his country. The first particle of snow which a blast shakes from the summit of the Alps, is no weightier than any of those which adhere to it in its progress; yet this insignificant particle sets in motion the avalanche, which buries whole vallies beneath its mass, and which is made up of atoms that otherwise would have continued disunited and motionless. I venture to publish my sentiments\*, because from the beginning of the French

\* See Appendix, No. XI.

Revolution I have watched its effects with painful solicitude, convinced from a very early period of it, that upon a firm opposition to the spirit of disorder which it has excited, almost every thing depends that can make life valuable, or its end happy. I am no friend to war; but I am an enemy to anarchy, immorality, and irreligion. I am not, and I never have been, a zealot for any speculative opinion respecting the different kinds of government; but I always have been, and I hope always shall be, an enemy, not to the sober correction of abuses, but to the destruction of *any* sort of government whatever, for the chance of introducing a better.

Deeply impressed with these sentiments, I equally abhor POWER opposed to RIGHT, whether exercised by one man, by five, or by a million. I abhor all those who can say one to another, "Let our strength be the law of justice, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth." Who can now deny that the "strength" of France is her only "law of justice," and that in her estimation, whatever is "feeble, is found to be nothing worth?"

There are still among us many well-meaning persons, who think that in speaking of the French

nation, or any part of it, all severity of censure ought to be avoided; and who possibly may not approve the warmth with which I wish to express myself in speaking of their conduct. While there was a chance that gentle phrases would lull to sleep the dæmon of anarchy—while France had not yet so clearly avowed her unalterable determination to persist at all hazards in a systematic subversion of all existing governments, and in depredations on the private property of all ranks, from the prince to the peasant;—while there was a hope that the voice of humanity might prevail against military despotism; I will own, that if ever hypocrisy can be right, it might then have been right; and that while the heart bled for the miseries of mankind, there might have been some semblance of wisdom in moulding the features of the face so as to assume a placid indifference. But to such little-minded cunning I must answer in the words of one who was no mean politician, “Ego sic existimo, Quirites! quod verum est, simplex, atque sincerum, id hominum naturæ aptissimum.”

I have not written these Observations with any design of making them subservient to the

particular interests of any party among us, whether already existing, or struggling to break from the egg ; but I give an opinion, founded on at least no hasty consideration of our moral and political situation, of the danger, to which we are exposed, and the ample means we have of saving our country, if we will but unite in making a vigorous use of them. In our present situation we have no safe alternative, but either such an immediate peace as will preserve untouched the means of our hereafter maintaining our rank among nations ; or else, animation and enterprize, no local or professional prejudices, no narrow and selfish policy, no party spirit in conducting the war.

If it is right to adopt the purblind policy of those times, to which no Englishman can look back but with shame ; why then, let us make peace on *any* terms ;—let us bow down before the Divinity of Human Reason ;—let us sacrifice all the civil institutions which our ancestors defended with their swords, and gradually improved by their wisdom ;—let us abandon the profession of that religion to which our fathers taught us to adhere ;—see, without daring to resent it, all those principles scoffed at that are dear to the good man's heart ; look tamely on while, like



those of Venice, our arsenals that have sent terror through the world are dismantled ; and see our mariners and our manufacturers begging their bread ! let us submit to all this, and spin out a miserable existence in consuming the few relics of former industry and skill, which the *Great Nation* may deem too insignificant to extort as contributions, for the honour she does us in condescending to make us savages !—But if a drop of that blood is in our veins which flowed at Cressy and at Agincourt, if a spark of that wisdom in our minds which taught our ancestors that defence at home depends upon being terrible abroad ; then let us once more fight on FOREIGN GROUND.—It is yet possible that future generations may not be ashamed to mention the times we live in ; and that this part of our annals may be classed with the victories of an Edward and a Henry the Fifth ; that our generals may rival a Marlborough, and our statesmen a Chatham.

What reason is there for this anxiousness to accept of even a ruinous peace—Are we afraid that our sailors will forget the first of June, the thirteenth of February, and the eleventh of October—Are we afraid that no such men are now remaining as the few battalions who drove twice

their number from Lincelles; as the handful of cavalry that scattered a whole army on the plains of Cateau!—Who were they, but such as ALL the people are?

But I hear it said, “We want resources for powerful exertions?” That the war requires an expence which it is but too probable wi’l press with great severity on very many respectable persons, is a painful truth, which it would be absurd to palliate or deny. But can we have peace, excepting on terms which will be far more ruinous? As to resources for carrying on the war, I wish to make a remark respecting ourselves, which we have found to be true respecting our enemies; and it is *this*, that questions of finance will always materially affect the contests between faction and faction; but that where strong passions are let loose, they have very little influence on the disputes between nation and nation. As to the real sufficiency of our resources, no one who knows the solid foundation of our national wealth, can entertain the smallest doubt on the subject. National wealth is very distinct from public credit, and the one may be rapidly increasing, while the other is as rapidly diminishing. Such a state of things may be, and indeed actu-

ally exists now, but it cannot last long ; for public and private distress cannot long be separated. As yet our means remain ; but the difficulty of obtaining them for the public service becomes hourly greater ; and principally because of our *defensive plan of operations*.

The present war is attended with an immense increase of expenditure, and unless there is either an increase of the quantity of money, or a more rapid circulation of the usual amount, derived from general confidence that what is bought one day may be sold without loss on another, all private transactions will stagnate ; and every individual who does not profit by military contracts, or the immense balance of our foreign trade, must feel the general distress. As to gold and silver, if both were imported by shiploads, they would vanish from circulation in times of national distrust. Whether we carry on a tamely defensive war, or make a truce with robbers that are marauding before our eyes ; in either case the same distrust will remain, will cause a progressive diminution of the private circulation of property, and severely injure the industry and the wealth of the nation. Hitherto the evil is only in its infancy ; but without a speedy restoration of general confidence

in the national safety, it will soon grow to an enormous bulk, and that confidence can only be restored by a safe peace, or by the most vigorous exertions.

Our military means are hitherto unimpaired ; perhaps less diminished than in any former war ; the specie which has lately been imported has probably far exceeded all that was exported in the former part of this war ; the balance of trade is greatly in our favour ; and though the produce of national labour must have been considerably diminished by military levies, yet the remainder has far exceeded the consumption. Such a situation leaves no room to fear a failure of military means ; but it requires extreme caution in the measures to be adopted, in order to obtain them for the public. It requires extreme caution to prevent those who have not the means of increasing their incomes from sinking under a twofold pressure, arising from a diminution of their disposable income by the increased demands of the state, and also from a diminution of its relative value, which is the consequence of its remaining the same integral part of a mass, of which the numerical value is rapidly increasing.

But it is not within my present plan to enter into an investigation of the various resources of the nation, and the means of bringing them forward, without oppressing the people. This is a species of political arithmetic, respecting which it is much better to be silent, than to write in a superficial and popular style: hazarding bold conjectures, without that deep reflection, and those extensive views of a question in all its relations which such subjects require. The wild speculations which so rapidly succeed one another, catch the public attention, are loudly praised, and in a day or two forgotten, are a striking proof that on this subject as well as every other,

A little learning is a dangerous thing.

One more observation, and I have done. If those country gentlemen who, like yourself, wish for nothing more than to be useful, and desire no other reward for their services than the good opinion of their constituents, would resolutely take the lead at all times in the inspection and revisal of the measures proposed by the executive government—a task for which no abilities are more fit than that plain solid sense which is so peculiarly the characteristic of an English gentleman; if they would de-

termine to stand foremost in the consideration of important questions, would always speak out, and never leave the public mind to be influenced by the declamations of statesmen by profession, of any party, the people would universally be influenced by their opinions. Their opposition would not be called the clamour of a faction striving to gain places; their approbation would not be called, the interested support of a faction striving to retain them.

To the conduct of your House, my friend, the public looks with peculiar anxiety. The times are arduous—the times are awful!—Within the duration of the present Parliament the fate of Britain must probably be decided. If the House of Commons should lose the confidence of the People, it must perish, and the People will perish with it. That confidence cannot be lost through hostile artifices or factious clamour, but through the misconduct of its Members only; and on their heads will rest the dreadful responsibility. If they are deeply impressed with the sentiment, that they are placed in a situation which should raise them far above the views of ordinary ambition, and have objects to attain of far different importance from the common pursuits of life—

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if attentive to the wishes of the nation, and trusting to its support, they vigilantly resist all the abuses of office, while they animate the executive government to vigour and exertion—if they unite in their debates the instruction, dignity, and decision becoming the Senate of such a country, at such a crisis—I shall wish for no other omen of our safety and prosperity. I forbear to reverse the picture ; but must observe, that the Members of the House of Commons, selected from so many classes of the community, and connected with all ;—with the higher, by relation, friendship, and hospitality,—with the lower, by protection, patronage, and employment, have a personal and individual importance, scarcely less considerable than that which they derive from their legislative capacity. Their influence over the public opinion might become almost unbounded; and from this arises a new and most important class of duties.—To diffuse information, to correct prejudices, to study the wants, and reform the manners of the people ; above all, to set the first example of reverence to the laws, and cheerful submission to all public burthens, are in some degree, though not equally, in the power of every Member of Parliament.

With such a government, if the enemy prevail, it will not be till the last of Britons has perished on the last rock of Snowdon;—if they prevail, it will be over a country desolated as by those terrible convulsions of nature which at once shatter *fenced cities into ruinous heaps*. One of the bravest and most successful of our enemies confessed, in the moment of victory, “that he had learnt that Englishmen might be slain, that English ships might be sunk, but that English courage was invincible.”—And shall we surrender the honour and independence of our country, at the very time that the descendants of that gallant enemy are left with no other consolation in their defeat, than the consciousness of having merited some similar encomium?



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## APPENDIX.

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No. I.—page. 6.

**F**ROM various considerations I feel justified in asserting, that the population of Great Britain and Ireland, including that of the lesser islands which surround them, is very moderately computed at seventeen millions.

This assertion goes so much beyond the usual estimates, that I should not presume to make it, if I had not now before me such evidence on the subject as I think is incontrovertible. But as a long discussion of questions in political arithmetic might be tedious to many persons, I shall, for the present, only mention a few circumstances, which may assist the reader in forming his own judgment of the truth of my opinion.

1. With respect to the population of England and Wales, among other ways of approximating to the true amount, I some years ago made a

very careful analysis of the labour of cultivating and managing land, from the kitchen garden to the grazing farm. To the families immediately employed in these occupations are to be added, all those mechanics whose occupations are inseparable from the former; who are employed in repairing and building, in making the implements of husbandry, &c. &c. &c.; and these collectively form what may be properly called the agricultural population, which I found could not be less than in the proportion of one individual to five acres of inclosed, or otherwise cultivated land; rejecting nothing from the calculation but woods and wastes.

I am now enabled to say that the agricultural population is even greater than I supposed it to be.

The hundred of Desborough, in Buckinghamshire, after deducting the two towns of Marlow and Wycombe, which contain 4505 inhabitants, has a rural population of 8681; and as the cultivated land amounts to 38750 acres, the proportion is very nearly as one of the former to four and a half of the latter. But since hardly any of these 8681 are employed in manufactures, and a great many of the 4505 inhabitants of the towns are employed in husbandry, it follows

that, in this instance, the agricultural exceeds the rural population, and the true proportion would probably be as one to four, instead of one to four and a half.

In several parishes of the county of Cumberland, of which the circumstances appear to be accurately stated in Sir Frederic Eden's very useful Parochial Reports; and which I have chosen to consider separately, on account of their mountainous situation and extensive wastes, it appears that there are 29770 acres, of which only 8380 are cultivated. The inhabitants are 3135, of which number about 74 are not agricultural; the remaining 3061 are to 8380 nearly as one to two and two-thirds; which shows that even wastes furnish considerable employment to the neighbouring inhabitants.

Of three other parishes in the same county, in which the waste land bears a much less proportion to the cultivated, the former being only 3200, and the latter 9782 acres, the whole population is 1967, of which the agricultural part being 1804, is nearly as one to five acres and two-thirds of the cultivated land.

In fourteen other parishes lying in various parts of the kingdom, and which are described

with sufficient accuracy in the same Parochial Reports, the inhabitants are 7358, and the extent (including wastes) is 32118. I have taken all those parishes which are described as strictly agricultural, or grazing; and those only. But 7358 to 32118 is nearly in the proportion of one to four and one-third.

It therefore may be safely concluded from the foregoing statements, that since they collectively give 20904 to 89030, or one to nearly four and one-fourth, this may be taken as a general average of the population connected with husbandry. But since there are in England, upon a very moderate computation, 32,000,000 of inclosed, or otherwise cultivated, acres; these require a population of at least 7,500,000 for the direct and collateral employments of agriculture only. Of these about 7,000,000 form a part of the rural population, in which I include all towns that do not contain more than 1500 inhabitants, the remaining 500,000 are included in the population of cities and towns, containing 1500 or more inhabitants; and are employed in the agriculture of the adjacent country.

These towns certainly contain 3,500,000, and probably almost 4,000,000 of inhabitants. To

which number is to be added seven millions, for the rural part of the agricultural population; and also all the remaining inhabitants of the small towns, villages, and scattered houses, consisting of mariners, miners, manufacturers, &c. The whole added together can not possibly amount to a less number than eleven millions.

2. By another mode of computation, from the militia lists, as prepared and corrected for the purpose of balloting; and which I adopted about two years ago, in order to compute the population of Berkshire; I have found that the whole number of inhabitants was nearly as eleven to one of the number on the militia lists at the last general ballot, which took place before the war. It is obvious that in applying this proportion, regard must be had to times of war and peace, to maritime situations, to a rapidly increasing population, &c. &c.

A calculation by these lists is founded on a more correct basis than any other that has hitherto been adopted, and with proper precautions may be applied with considerable accuracy.

The calculation which I then made is confirmed, as nearly as can be expected, by a comparison with the hundred of Desborough, where the

proportion of the militia list to the whole population, in the year 1787 was as one to ten and two-thirds. But in this way it is ascertained that Berkshire contains about 110,000 inhabitants. This county is nearly a ninetieth part of England and Wales; it has rather *more* than its proportion of woods and wastes; has neither mines, manufactures, nor commerce, nor any town exceeding 10,000 inhabitants, and all its towns together do not contain 25,000. In this view of the question, the total population must be at least eleven millions.

3. The objections to an increasing population, which have been founded on the small number of assessed houses, have arisen, in part, from not having been sufficiently attentive to the consequences of the change which has almost universally taken place in the tenure of lands, by which many houses are reduced to the state of cottages, which formerly were occupied by small farmers and petty leaseholders, a race of men almost extinct. These houses are now exempted from taxes, because inhabited only by labourers; and because the lands formerly annexed to them are consolidated into large farms. The misappre-

hension has also in part arisen from the immense increase of the manufacturing and commercial towns, where far the greatest part of the families are excused from parochial, and consequently from assessed taxes.

In the mountainous parts of Cumberland, where the old tenures remain, I find five parishes mentioned in Sir Frederic Eden's Parochial Reports, in which the assessed houses amount to 158, and those not assessed to no more than 93; and of all the former only 13 have more than six windows.

But in 20 other country parishes, taken promiscuously from various parts of the kingdom, the assessed houses are 622, those not assessed 990. In ten towns of inferior size, taken in like manner promiscuously, the assessed houses are 1842, the others 2795. In large towns and cities, and other places of considerable employment for the poorer classes, the disproportion is far greater. As for instance, in Leeds there are 1836 assessed houses, and no less than 4855 dwellings of the poor. And on comparing all circumstances, I am convinced that the total number of houses in England and Wales must exceed two millions considerably.

4. By comparing the number of births with



that of deaths in a great many instances, it is proved, that in the country the former exceed the latter by considerably more than the proportion of three to two. That in 23 towns, of which none contain less than 2000 or more than 10,000 inhabitants, the births and deaths, as registered, are 47913 of the former to 38726 of the latter; and the disproportion will not be less than as four to three, if due allowance is made for the greater number of births than of burials, which are not included in the parochial registers because they belong to dissenting families; and the annual increase in such towns only, throughout the kingdom, by births, will be between 14,000 and 15,000. It also appears, that in very large towns the births are very little inferior in number to the deaths, if those of dissenters are added to those inserted in the parochial registers: and it is very probable the number by which the deaths exceed the births in the metropolis, is more than compensated by a contrary excess in only the two small counties of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, which, in point of extent, are not a forty-fifth part, and in population, not much more than a fifty-second part, of the whole of England and Wales.

5. Of the children born in this country, a greater proportion escape the dangers of infancy than in any other part of Europe, or perhaps in the world; and the average length of human life extends several years beyond that of the surrounding nations. Better morals, habitations, clothing, diet, greater personal security;—to these, and these only, can this remarkable difference be ascribed.

O! fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint  
Agricolae! quibus ipsa *procul discordibus armis*  
Fundit humo facilem victum justissima tellus.

The heart of Virgil went with his pen when he wrote these pathetic lines. They were evidently dictated by the melancholy recollection of civil discord and general confiscation, to pay in *lands* the *milliard* due to the soldiers of Augustus.

IMPIUS, hæc tam culta *novalia*, MILES habebit?

I am unwilling to trouble the reader, at present, with many more arguments and facts which might be added to those I have mentioned; and from a comparison of which, not only the actual population, but also the ratio of its increase dur-

ing the present century may be estimated with considerable accuracy.

The population of Ireland is clearly ascertained to be about four millions; and that of Scotland cannot be less than two millions and a half; so that the three taken together are surely not over-rated at seventeen millions, and very probably exceed this number.

I hope a few pages of dry political arithmetic will be forgiven, when the great importance of the question is considered: especially at this time, when the timid will easily believe whatever designing persons choose to insinuate as to a deficiency in the pecuniary and military resources of the nation. Upon the population of a country, and especially on its rural population, both the wealth and the strength of it must very materially depend; and it is surely of no small consequence to have adduced proofs that ours is at least twice as great as it has been represented by very ingenious writers, whose opinions are relied on with almost implicit confidence by our enemies; and who, after frequent confutation of their opinions, still persist in repeating them. I am persuaded that the error has chiefly arisen from not sufficiently considering the basis of their cal-

culations. I must now quit this subject; but hope that at no very distant time I shall be able to convince the most sceptical, that I have not accidentally, and I am sure I have not willingly, exaggerated.

## No. II.—P. 7.

No one who is at all acquainted with our history can be ignorant of the high estimation in which England was held among the nations of Europe, many centuries before we had any marine, or any commerce. Not to go back to the military reigns of some of our princes of the house of Plantagenet, I will only appeal to one instance, and that of more recent date. In what reign was the national character more respected than in that of Elizabeth? We had then no colonies, and ranked very low as a maritime power: Scotland was a separate kingdom, and Ireland in a state of the utmost disorder; yet the energy and the wisdom of her councils, aided by the national courage, extricated England from dangers which, if compared with the means of resistance, were far more formidable than any with which we are now threatened.

## No. III.—P. 7.

I believe it would be not at all difficult to prove that the internal resources of England, derived from many natural advantages which we possess, and from the industrious character of our countrymen, have from the earliest times been so great, that we have almost always enjoyed a rank among nations, far beyond the proportionate extent of our territories. The wealth of this nation has been comparatively greater, and our pecuniary distresses fewer than those of our neighbours. We have indeed felt in various periods of our history the mischievous consequences of ambition, and the still more mischievous consequences of discord; but we have always, I believe, recovered more speedily from those misfortunes than any of our neighbours. The limits of a note will not allow me to attempt the various, and, in several instances, the peculiar advantages which we possess, and which are unconnected with any foreign trade. I will only mention one circumstance, which must be admitted as a proof of either greater resources, or else of better govern-

ment, that there is no nation in Europe in which, for five or six centuries past, there have been so few instances of irregular attempts to supply the necessities of the government—no nation where the nominal value of money has so little varied from the real value of gold and silver.

I hope that none of the remarks which I have made will be interpreted, as if I wished to depreciate the importance of our commerce: we owe to it our naval superiority, and to that superiority we are indebted for many inestimable advantages. But it is a dangerous error to suppose that a navy is our only defence, and foreign trade the only source of our wealth.

#### No. IV.—P. 26.

- “ Oft o’er the trembling nations, from afar
- “ Has Scythia breath’d the living cloud of war ;
- “ And where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway,
- “ Their arms, their kings, their gods were roll’d away.

GEAT.

#### No. V.—P. 29.

I am unable to form any satisfactory conjecture of the military loss of the French, and of the countries now incorporated with France, during this exceedingly destructive war; and it is equally

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difficult for me to approximate with any accuracy to their loss by emigration, mental distress, want, and assassination by authority. Many assertions have been made by themselves, respecting their losses by all these circumstances; but which are in general so declamatory and so exaggerating, that they cannot be safely trusted, without a more careful investigation of the subject than I have the means of giving to it. Yet when the immense loss by incidents not of a military kind, is considered; when to this is added the enormous number of men, which for many years have been almost continually in the field, and the winter campaigns which they have made; the want of proper clothing, and moral discipline in their armies, and their peculiarly sanguinary system of attack; I cannot suppose that their loss can be less than 2,000,000 of men, from all these causes collectively. I am sure that any one conversant with the subject will not think that this is in any degree an exaggeration. The whole loss of France must certainly exceed three millions; and the remote consequences of this loss with respect to the future population must inevitably cause a gradual diminution of the inhabitants for many years to come, even if the pre-

sent causes of her loss should no longer exist. For with respect to depopulation, the consequences of sanguinary wars extend many years beyond the wars themselves. But I hope this subject will be treated with his usual ability, by an author, who is much better qualified to write on the interior affairs of France than I can be.

But upon the hypothesis, that France has lost two millions of men, which I am convinced is a very moderate calculation, I beg the reader's attention to the following comparison of the *present* military population of the French Republic, and the British islands.

France before the war had between	
twenty-five and twenty-six mil-	
lions of inhabitants, say	- 26,000,000
And the territories which have been	
already incorporated, about	- 3,000,000
	<hr/> 29,000,000

A sixth of these were males between	
the ages of eighteen and forty-five	4,833,333
Of these she has lost	- 2,000,000
	<hr/> 2,833,333
remainder	

But of these a small portion would have died in the common course of life, about 50,000



And as the population of France was increasing, though not by any means with the rapidity of the British islands, I will suppose that this increase, together with the preceding 50,000, may make the present fencible population of the French Republic - - - 3,000,000

Beyond this number I cannot believe that it can be carried by any probable computation.

But if the British islands contain seventeen millions of inhabitants, of which I have no doubt whatever, a sixth of these will be 2,833,333

But the more extended duration of human life, and the more rapidly increasing population, cause that the fencible men in England do not amount to many more than one-seventh of the total number. And as it is probable that the same circumstances apply in nearly the same proportion to the whole British islands collectively, we may believe that the actual fencible population is about 2,500,000, or only one-sixth part less than that of France.

The indolence of the men who are in the vigour of life, and the hard fate of the weaker sex, among those savage nations who live together with little subordination, is a fact which I believe stands uncontradicted by a single instance. Compelled to perpetual labour, and treated with tyrannical insolence, the situation of the females among them is an unanswerable proof that the greatest social inequality, and the most unjust, is always to be found in those societies where there is the least political restraint. The fashionable contempt for the female character, so contrary to the former habits of the French nation, the hard labour to which women are doomed there; the shocking neglect of age and infirmity, of which their hospitals are so melancholy a proof, and numberless other instances, all prove that France may be added to the many examples that moral equity is incompatible with pretensions to political equality: and that the weakest are always best protected where the regular gradations of social order are most strictly adhered to. Is it an improper pride in an Englishman to say, that there does not exist a country in the

world where childhood, old age, and infirmity, are so protected by moral habits, and by law; or where the labours of life are distributed in so just a proportion to the ability to undergo them?

No. VII.—P. 32.

The artifices of intimidation are well understood by barbarians of every age and country, and very few are firm enough to be totally exempt from their influence. When the Huns desolated Europe, their leader announced himself as the scourge of God! when, like that deadly blast of his native deserts which kills every living creature that does not prostrate itself before it, Mahomet spread destruction among the nations of the east, the same arts of terror prepared the way to his victories: and when the Gauls descended upon Italy, like a stream of liquid fire from a volcano, their leader was Brennus, that is, the *burner*. If a modern Brennus should insist on adding his sword to the weights in the scale, I trust we shall not want a Camillus to chastise his insolence.

No. VIII.—P. 33.

Boissy d'Anglas, the reporter to the Commit-

tee which framed the present French Constitution, in the speech which he made when he proposed it to the Convention, hinted, in language not at all difficult to be understood, that the Committee had in some respects accommodated it to the times, and that some very important parts of the plan had been so framed as to admit of future improvement.

No. IX.—P. 34.

France is so situated with respect to the surrounding nations, that it seems nearly impossible for her to maintain herself in that proud pre-eminence to which she aspires, without a very considerable and permanent military establishment; and yet any other military force but a disciplined militia seems absolutely incompatible with the spirit of a democratic government; unless indeed the regular force be so inconsiderable, and the militia so well disciplined, that the former is kept in awe by the latter. But hitherto none of their great political leaders have ventured to propose such a future reduction of their army, as may prevent its being formidable to the representatives of the people: and in fact the whole system of their policy seems to be constructed

upon a directly opposite principle ; that of keeping on foot an immense army at the cost of tributary republics. This is not the plan of men who wish to give Liberty, but of men who aspire to universal Dominion.

## No. K.—P. 40.

On this subject I beg leave to refer the reader to a very excellent “ Essay on the Ambition and “ Conquests of France,” &c. printed for Debrett, in 1797.

## No. XI—P. 56.

From many observations which I have made with respect to the remoter causes of the Revolution, which has involved France in so much misery, I cannot help attributing it in a considerable degree to *envy* of the British nation. Ever since the war before the last, the French have been indignant at our greatness, and the most popular projects among them have always been such as seemed calculated to enable them either to depress us, or to surpass us. Whatever might have been the opinions of a few academicians and theorists in France, the nation at large was not prepared for the change which has happened, but

by slow degrees ; and the steps which led to that change, all of them owed their popularity, not to a republican spirit, but to *envy* of England. Envy of our greatness, and a desire to supplant us in that commerce, which they had been accustomed to consider as our principal resource, were, in truth, the popular reasons why the same nation which used every art of intrigue to give Sweden an absolute Monarch, almost at the same time exerted itself to detach America from the British Crown. From the successful termination of this enterprize, the French had conceived the highest hopes ; and the utter disappointment of those hopes was followed by other endeavours to obtain the same object by different means.

In the year 1785, I was for a short time in France, and then, as at all times since, England was the constant point of comparison. The hope of the French nation then was, that the finances of England were irretrievably ruined, and their own as certainly re-established. England would no longer be able to hold her head so high ; for the scheme of establishing a sinking fund upon a fixed basis was chimerical, and Mr. Neckar had discovered the art of paying every thing with nothing. Next came a fashionable opinion, and certainly a very just one, that we owe our great-

ness to our Constitution; and now something far better than our Constitution was to make them greater than we. A few of its outlines only they were acquainted with; of the circumstances which are most essential to the excellence of its grand principles they knew very little; and of those admirable regulations and institutions by which, in the inferior concerns of society, order is preserved, weakness protected, and justice disinterestedly distributed, hardly *any* foreigners have an idea. And yet these are little less essential to the welfare of mankind, and the prosperity of nations, than the more striking features of a political system. In the autumn and winter of 1788 I was again in various parts of France, with the very respectable friend to whom this letter is addressed. The leaven was then fermenting, which in a few months more burst all the bonds of society. We heard a great deal of the regeneration of their government; every thing was to be like England, only every thing was to be *better*. Then, too, it was easy to discover that it was not emulation, but envy, by which the mass of the French nation was actuated. It has been by artfully adapting their projects to this popular spirit, that the chiefs of their factions have, in general, maintained their ascendancy

over the public; and by the same arts they continue to divert the attention from domestic concerns, and irritate the animosity of the people to madness.

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The lines which I have quoted in the title-page of this Letter are taken from a manuscript poem in the Bodleian library, at Oxford, written, I believe, about the year 1388, and entitled a "Register of 52 Folyes." It is written in stanzas of fourteen lines; the handwriting and language correspond with the reign of Richard the Second. It begins with the following lines,

Loke how Flaundes doth fare with his folyhede,  
Will no man dygge after trouth with no maner toles, &c.  
and contains a strong satire on the political follies of the day.

There are in the same volume several other political poems, probably by the same author, who appears to have been a true Englishman, a friend of the Crown; and a friend of the People, and bred in all those political maxims, with respect to constitutional doctrines and foreign relations of the kingdom, which some of us at last, after so many ages of prosperity, have discovered to be foolish and ruinous prejudices.



I have said the more of these Poems, because I believe they are not known, and because they belong to a period of our history which is at present not a little interesting.

An historical parallel between the origin, the progress, and the miseries of democratic confusion in the fourteenth and the present century, might be made a very instructive lesson to mankind. The ancient part might begin with the political and religious libertinism of the Knights Templars; and the corresponding part of modern history is known to every one. Sufficient materials for a work of this kind lie buried in public libraries, and in authors who are seldom consulted. Such a parallel would demonstrate that in all times the same theories incite men to the same conduct, and that speculative Liberty very seldom fails of leading to practical Slavery.

THE END.

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#### ERRATA.

Page 33, line 16, *for has read have.*

36, l. 3, *for as read than.*

41, l. 18, *after that read it.*







